

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A magnetic bearing element comprising:
an annular permanent magnet divided in a circumferential direction thereof at at least one location to form a radially extending slit, the radially extending slit defined by opposing faces of the magnet; and
an annular binding band surrounding, engaged with, and exerting a preloading force on said annular permanent magnet,
wherein the opposing faces of the magnet are not in contact with each other.

Claim 2 (cancelled).

3. (previously presented) The magnetic bearing element according to claim 1, wherein the permanent magnet is divided in a circumferential direction thereof at multiple locations to form multiple radially extending slits and a plurality of spaced apart segments and the plurality of spaced apart segments are not in contact with adjacent segments.

4. (previously presented) The magnetic bearing element according to claim 3, wherein the locations are distributed regularly around a periphery of the permanent magnet.

5. (previously presented) The magnetic bearing element according to claim 1, wherein the bearing element comprises multiple permanent magnets arranged concentrically with one another, all of which are divided at at least one location and spaced apart there.

6. (currently amended) The magnetic bearing element according to claim 5, wherein the radially extending slit of one of the multiple permanent magnets is offset from the radially extending slot ~~to~~ of another one of the multiple permanent magnets in the circumferential direction.

7. (previously presented) The magnetic bearing element according to claim 1, wherein the annular band is made from carbon-fiber material.

8. (currently amended) A magnetic bearing element comprising:

- a hub;
- an annular magnet mounted on said hub and divided in a circumferential direction in at least one location to form a radially extending slit defined by opposing faces of the magnet; and
- an annular binding band surrounding and engaged with said annular magnet, ~~and said annular binding band~~ exerting an inwardly directed radial force ~~thereon for~~ preloading said annular magnet,

wherein the opposing faces of the annular magnet are not in contact with each other.

9. (previously presented) The magnetic bearing element according to claim 9, wherein the permanent magnet is divided in a circumferential direction thereof at multiple locations to form multiple radially extending slits and a plurality of spaced apart segments and the plurality of spaced apart segments are not in contact with adjacent segments.

10. (previously presented) The magnetic bearing element according to claim 10, wherein the locations are distributed regularly around a periphery of the permanent magnet.

11. (previously presented) The magnetic bearing element according to claim 9, wherein the bearing element comprises multiple permanent magnets arranged concentrically with one another, all of which are divided at at least one location and spaced apart there.

12. (currently amended) The magnetic bearing element according to claim ~~12~~ 11, wherein the radially extending slit of one of the multiple permanent magnets is offset from the radially extending slot ~~to~~ of another one of the multiple permanent magnets in the circumferential direction.

13. (previously presented) The magnetic bearing element according to claim 9, wherein the annular band is made from carbon-fiber material.